SERPENT IN THE BOTTLE

[*Ed. note: This stamp was first mentioned in Volume 7, Number 1 of these pages by Dr. Willard Stanley. I include his comments below. It is apparent that times have changed in that most of the recent stamp issues that depict snakes show them in their natural habitat and colors.*]

> Of the stamps showing snakes, very few are devoted to showing snakes as zoological exhibits. All too frequently they are stylized as a symbol of something—usually something unpleasant.
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> A striking example of snake symbolism is a recent issue by Turkey showing a coiled and striking snake in a bottle with two hands forcing a stopper into the neck of the bottle to confine the snake. The stamp was issued to mark the recent meeting of the 25th International Congress Against Alcoholism, which was held at the University of Istanbul.

This is an interesting example of a *tête-bêche* pair. This is a French term that means "head-to-tail" (literally "head-to-head"). It defines two stamps printed in reverse to one another. They may be printed as reverse head-to-head, reverse side-by-side, or reverse foot-to-foot. You may use *tête-bêche* stamps as pairs in payment of postage rates or as single stamps.

Tête-bêche Pair

Turkey issued this stamp (Sc#1213a) on 10 September 1956 to promote the Congress meeting held 10–15 September. It was printed by offset both in regular sheets and in sheets with alternate vertical rows inverted and perforated 10½.

Dr. Stanley also included a comment from a Mr. Everett, "An interesting aspect is that, although Turkey is a Moslem country, the inscription for this design came from the Christian Bible. It is based on Proverbs 25:32. 'At last it bites like a serpent and stings like an adder.'" Clearly there is no such inscription on the stamp itself, so I wondered if it appeared on the margins of the sheet, or in some commemorative cachet or panel. However, my investigations have not revealed any such inscription on covers or other related material. If any reader can provide more information about this matter, please contact the editor.